

The testimony indicated the following:

Muslims in Europe have been subjected to genocide, mass killings, forced migration and torture, including rape, in the former Yugoslavia; harassment, including police brutality and attacks and other hate crimes by extremist groups against Muslims have been reported throughout Europe, particularly in Germany, France and the United Kingdom; Muslims have been denied permits to build or repair mosques in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and elsewhere in Europe; Muslim women are frequently the subject of attacks, discrimination and other forms of abuse and harassment because they choose to wear a head covering;

Struggling Jewish communities in Eastern Europe are often made the scapegoats for the pain of the transition from centrally planned economies to market capitalism; the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and memorials has been on the rise; and anti-Semitic publications, such as *The Protocols of Zion*, and neo-Nazi computer games have received wider distribution accompanied by the rise of skinhead gangs and hatemongers throughout Europe;

The Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate has been subject to recurring acts of violence, and faces serious obstacles imposed by the Government of Turkey, including the closing of the Theological School of Halki, which have a detrimental impact on the activities of the Patriarchate and Orthodox believers in Turkey;

Catholic believers face harassment and violence in parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia as well as Northern Ireland, and they face serious impediments to the practice of their faith elsewhere in Europe, including in Belarus, Russia, Greece, Turkey, and Romania;

Some evangelical and charismatic Christian churches have been denied registration by the Governments of Bulgaria, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Greece and have been harassed, as well as have reportedly had religious materials confiscated; at least one charismatic church in Germany has come under intense scrutiny by the local officials and the German Bundestag's Commission of Inquiry on So-called Sects and Psycho-Groups, faced other forms of harassment, and been the target of vandalism and threats of violence;

Jehovah's Witnesses have been denied registration in a number of OSCE participating States, including Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, and Latvia; have been subjected to various forms of harassment, including the prohibition on importation of religious literature and denial of the freedom to assemble for worship services; France's Parliamentary Commission on Sects has categorized Jehovah's Witnesses as a "criminal sect" for its prohibition against blood transfusions; Germany's Federal Administrative Court has de-

nied legal status to the Jehovah's Witnesses;

Mormons have been subjected to continued acts of harassment, including confiscation of religious materials, and assault, in Bulgaria; and are prevented from freely sharing their beliefs in several OSCE participating States, including Greece and Turkey; and

Scientologists, including U.S. citizens, have been subjected to pervasive civil, political and economic discrimination, harassment, surveillance, and orchestrated boycotts in Germany.

In the months following this hearing, the Helsinki Commission has noted a chilling effect on religious liberty from actions taken by national parliaments. A law passed on December 10, 1997 by the Austrian Parliament requires that a religious group prove a 20-year existence, have a creed distinct from previously registered groups, and have a membership of at least 0.02% of the population or 16,000 members before they are granted full rights under law. Concerns over this law were raised in Vienna by a Helsinki Commission delegation this past January. A similar law was passed in 1997 in Macedonia. In January 1998, a Helsinki Commission delegation, lead by Co-Chairman CHRISTOPHER SMITH, traveled to Moscow to discuss concerns with the 1997 Russian religion law with Russian government officials, minority religious groups, and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Some governments have passed laws creating government information centers to alert the public to "dangerous" groups. The Austrian and Belgian governments have set up hotlines for the public and, through government sponsored advisory centers, distribute information on groups deemed "dangerous." In official Austrian literature, Jehovah's Witnesses are labeled "dangerous" and members of this group report that the stigma associated with this government label is difficult to overcome in Austrian society. These information centers directly violate the commitments that Austria and Belgium have made as participating States of the OSCE to "foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect," in paragraph 16 of the Vienna Concluding Document, and represent excessive governmental intrusion into the public discussion on religious matters.

Several western European Parliaments have or are currently investigating and reporting on the activities of minority religious groups. These parliamentary investigations have also had a chilling effect on religious liberty and appear to cause a public backlash against groups being investigated or labeled "dangerous." For instance, the German Parliament is currently conducting its investigation into "dangerous sects" and "psycho-groups" and issued an interim report in January 1998. At the Helsinki Commission's September 18 hearing, at least one independent evangelical church reported a direct correlation between the harassment, vandalism and threats of

violence they experience and the investigation by the German Parliament's commission. The French Parliament's report contained a list of "dangerous" groups in order to warn the public against them and the Belgian Parliament's report had an informal appendix which was widely circulated, which included allegations against many mainline Catholic groups, Quakers, Hasidic Jews, Buddhists, and the YWCA (although not the YMCA).

On Wednesday, May 20, 1998, a coalition of religious groups, including Hasidic Jews, Hindu, Bahia, Seventh Day Adventist, evangelical Protestant and charismatic Catholic communities, Plan to hold a press conference in Brussels to announce that they are about to launch a court challenge to the Belgian Parliamentary Report and the Belgian Government's Advice and Information Center. The premise of the legal challenge is that these actions by the Belgian government violate Belgium's international commitments to religious liberty. I am pleased to see these and other groups such as Human Rights Without Frontiers standing up for this fundamental freedom, and acting to highlight and challenge the actions by European governments that violate the Helsinki Accords and other international commitments on religious liberty.

Mr. President, the recent action by the House adopting the Freedom From Religious Persecution Act, and pending consideration of that bill and parallel measures in the Senate, clearly show that this issue is one that concerns Americans. Many Americans have family or friends who are citizens in countries that have solemnly promised to protect religious liberty, but then restrict it or deny it. Many Americans, through their own religious affiliations, make donations to support the work of their denominations outside this country, or take part in that work themselves as a personal expression of their beliefs. Actions taken by foreign governments that have promised to protect religious liberty and then violate these promises can and do directly affect American citizens during their travels for business or pleasure, when they support the overseas religious efforts of their faiths by donations or personal participation, or through negative effects on their relatives and friends who reside in these countries.

Accordingly, I call upon my colleagues to remain vigilant on this subject, and assure them and all Americans that the Commission will remain active and engaged as we seek to document violations and protect the rights of affected persons.●

TRIBUTE TO RABBI MOSHE SHERER

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I regret to inform my colleagues in the Senate of the death on Sunday, May 17 of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, President of Agudath Israel of America, a vibrant

organization of Orthodox Jews in our country.

I was privileged to have known Rabbi Sherer for many years and to benefit from his wise counsel. He lived an extraordinarily righteous and productive life, and was a kindly but driving force in the unprecedented growth of his organization and its perspective within America. Rabbi Sherer was also a very successful bridgebuilder to other faith communities in his effort to spread the light of religious truth throughout our country.

I shall miss Rabbi Sherer, and wish to extend to his wife, Deborah, and his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren my condolences and best wishes.

Mr. President, I ask that the full text of two articles from the New York Times of May 19, 1998 be printed in the RECORD. The first describes Rabbi Sherer's remarkable life, and the second the effect of his death on the more than 20,000 people who came to his funeral in New York two days ago.

The articles follow:

[From the New York Times, May 19, 1998]

RABBI MOSHE SHERER, 76, WHO CONTRIBUTED TO RISE OF ORTHODOXY'S RIGHT WING IN U.S.
(By Gustav Niebuhr)

Rabbi Moshe Sherer, who built a relatively small Orthodox Jewish organization, Agudath Israel of America, into a politically and religiously influential force among American Jewish groups, died Sunday afternoon in Manhattan. He was 76 and lived in Brooklyn.

He died after an illness of several months, a spokesman for the group said.

Rabbi Sherer had served since 1963 as president of Agudath Israel of America, an educational and social service organization that also represents hundreds of Orthodox religious schools, or yeshivas in the United States and Canada.

Through his work at Agudath Israel, Rabbi Sherer played a leading role in the rise of Orthodox Judaism's right wing, which has gained in influence and self-confidence since the 1960's, at the expense of Orthodoxy's more moderate wing.

That shift seemed unlikely when Rabbi Sherer joined Agudath Israel as its executive vice president in 1941, when it was a small group with few employees. In an interview last year, he said some people warned him that Agudath Israel's rigorously traditional Orthodox approach had little future in America. But, he said, "it's a growth stock today."

Sociologists say that Orthodoxy's strict traditionalists have benefited from charismatic leadership, a high birthrate and anxiety among many Orthodox Jews over signs of moral turmoil in society.

Today, Agudath Israel, with headquarters at 84 William St., Manhattan, has branches throughout the country and a Washington office that lobbies the government on religious issues. It belongs to the Agudath Israel World Organization, of which Rabbi Sherer was appointed chairman in 1980. In Israel, it is associated with the strictly Orthodox United Torah Judaism Party, a member of the governing coalition.

Among Agudath Israel's earliest projects under Rabbi Sherer's leadership was sending food shipments to Jews in Nazi-dominated Eastern Europe and producing affidavits to help refugees immigrate to the United States. After World War II, the organization

shipped food and religious articles to Jews in displaced persons camps and assisted those who wanted to immigrate.

With Agudath Israel's constituency of religious schools, Rabbi Sherer served a world that prizes scholarship. Born in Brooklyn on June 8, 1921, he was educated at Torah Vodath, a Brooklyn yeshiva, and Ner Israel rabbinical college in Baltimore. He told associates that his main mentor was the late Rabbi Aharon Kotler, who founded a highly regarded yeshiva in Lakewood, N.J.

Yet Rabbi Sherer was known as an organizer rather than an intellectual, with diplomatic and political skills that enabled him to forge coalitions within the decentralized and contentious world of Orthodox Judaism, and with other religious groups.

"He was able to take disparate groups, bring them together and get them to cooperate in the areas where they would agree," said Rabbi Nosson Scherman, general editor of *Arts and Sciences*, a major publisher of Jewish texts.

Rabbi Steven M. Dworken, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Council of America, which represents about 1,000 Orthodox rabbis, said Rabbi Sherer "was responsible in many, many ways for placing Agudath Israel on the map."

As the most strictly observant of the Orthodox community became more visible and organized politicians took note. In January 1994, Rabbi Sherer delivered the invocation at the first inauguration of Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York. Vice President Al Gore was the speaker at the organization's 76th annual dinner, held in New York the day Rabbi Sherer died.

But the organization was also considered important earlier. When *The New York Times* described the growing influence of local religious groups in a 1974 article, it quoted Rabbi Sherer as saying about Agudath Israel, "There is hardly a legislator from any Jewish neighborhood in the city who does not know how we stand on issues that concern us and how thorough we are about informing our constituents about positions the legislators take on these issues."

Still, he did not have the visibility of some of his counterparts at other Jewish organizations. "He wasn't a headline-maker," said Samuel C. Heilman, professor of Jewish studies and sociology at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. Instead, Professor Heilman said, Rabbi Sherer worked quietly "to keep the channels of communication open" between Agudath Israel and other Jewish organizations.

What helped is that Agudath Israel reached out to the entire Jewish community with its programs promoting Jewish identity and learning. Last September, for example, the organization sponsored a celebration for men who had completed a seven-year program of reading the entire Talmud, the Jewish civil and religious law, at the rate of a page a day. An estimated 70,000 people participated, filling Madison Square Garden and other arenas.

Rabbi Sherer sometimes took positions at odds with non-Orthodox organizations. He supported aid by Federal and state governments to religious schools, a stand that placed his organization on the same side of that issue as the Roman Catholic Church but nettled some Jewish groups that supported a strict separation of church and state.

Testifying before Congress on this issue in 1961, he said, "Classical Judaism has, from the very inception of the Jewish people, placed religious education in sharp focus as the centrality of life itself."

More recently, he helped lead an effort to counter attempts by Reform and Conservative Jews to gain official recognition of non-Orthodox rabbis in Israel. Last Novem-

ber, he announced that Agudath Israel would spend \$2 million for newspaper advertisements to promote the view that within Israel, conversions and other rites should remain under Orthodox control.

Agudath Israel's spokesman, Rabbi Avi Shafran, said Rabbi Sherer's stand stemmed from the conviction that "the only unifying force for the Jewish people is the Jewish religious heritage."

Rabbi Sherer is survived by his wife, the former Deborah Portman; two daughters, Rochel Langer of Monsey, N.Y., and Elky Goldschmidt of Brooklyn; a son, Rabbi Shimon Sherer of Brooklyn, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

BOROUGH PARK MOURNS JEWISH LUMINARY

(By Garry Pierre-Pierre)

The armada of yellow buses that usually clog the narrow streets of Borough Park, Brooklyn, shuttling students from yeshivas to their homes, was nowhere in sight yesterday. Instead, the streets were filled with thousands of people mourning the death of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, whom many considered the elder statesman of the American Orthodox Jewish community.

The mourners crowded the streets, stood on rooftops and sat in their living rooms to listen to eulogies, broadcast throughout the neighborhood by loudspeaker, for a man known for his tireless efforts to unite Jewish sects and to reach out to the secular world.

Within hours of his death on Sunday afternoon, his followers had begun gathering on the streets around the modest brick building of Congregation Agudath Israel of Borough Park. By late yesterday, more than 20,000 had lined up to pay their respects.

When Rabbi Sherer's white coffin, draped with a black velvet cloth, was carried from the hearse into a sun-soaked street, a huge cry of grief rose from the crowd. The coffin was supported by about 20 men and seemed in danger of toppling as the men jostled for position.

"He had the power and charisma to bring the secular and religious groups together," said Joseph Rappaport, an officer with Congregation Agudath Israel. "He was able to create bridges."

Rabbi Sherer, who died at age 78, had for more than 30 years headed Agudath Israel of America, an advocacy organization that he helped transform from a small group into a formidable movement that claims 100,000 members and has branches around the country.

Among those paying respects yesterday were Gov. George E. Pataki, Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and other politicians and dignitaries. The crowds grew so big that the police blocked car traffic from 13th through 16th Avenues and 43d through 50th Streets.

One mourner, Morton M. Avigdor, leaned against a police barricade in front of the congregation building and explained how Rabbi Sherer had fought for government benefits and services for children in nonpublic schools by allying himself with Catholic school advocates.

"He felt that people of all faith should be entitled to education," said Mr. Avigdor, a lawyer. "It is truly a great loss."

TRIBUTE TO NICHOLAS "NICK" LEIST

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, across our great nation there are thousands of teachers dedicated to the development of young minds. In Missouri, as a former Governor and U.S. Senator, I have had the opportunity to meet many educators and have a great deal